

administrator. Every position which he held, he held with distinction. We have lost such a good and great friend. It is a void which cannot be easily filled, particularly in Andhra Pradesh. Dr. Chenna Reddy would be remembered for a long time to come and to get a substitute for him is difficult.

I join the House in expressing my sorrow and also praying for his soul to rest in peace.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Sir, it is always a matter of sorrow to lose a leader like Dr. Reddy who was a Member of this House and was one of our colleagues. He occupied very high positions in life and distinguished himself as one of our able administrators and politicians.

Sir, I associate myself with what has been said in this House and I convey my sincere condolences to the members of the bereaved family.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (Mumbai North-West) : Sir, it is a shocking news that Dr. Chenna Reddy passed away. As a parliamentarian, an administrator and a freedom fighter, his contributions cannot be forgotten. Recently, Andhra Pradesh has faced a cyclone and suffered tremendous loss of life. In addition to that, today's news of the sad demise of Dr. Chenna Reddy is equally shocking. I pay, on behalf of my Party, homage to Dr. Reddy, may his soul rest in place.

MR. SPEAKER : We deeply mourn the passing away of Dr. M. Chenna Reddy and convey our condolences to the members of the bereaved family.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

11.12 hrs.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow on 3rd December, 1996 at 11.00 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Thalassemia

*141. DR. VALLABH BHAI KATHIRIA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of cases of thalassemia all over the country;

(b) whether the Government are aware of the recent increase in the price of injection 'Desferal' which is very important for the treatment of thalassemia patients;

(c) the steps taken by the Government for easy availability of this drug at cheaper rates;

(d) whether the Government have any proposal to include thalassemia in National control programmes; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) There is no central registry for Thalassemia patients. A limited study was conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research between 1986-1989 on a group of selected children in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta indicating the prevalence of Thalassemia trait at an average of about 6% in the study population. This was extrapolated statistically to estimate that about 6000 to 8000 children are born every year with Thalassemia major in India which represents 0.02% of the total births.

(b) A slight rise in the CIF price of Desferal had occurred during 1994-95. The price has since come down and is lower than the 1994 price.

(c) In order to facilitate easy availability, imports of Desferal are allowed without any restriction under the import policy as an item under OGL. Imports also enjoy concessional duty at zero percent for both bulk drugs as well as formulations. The formulations are also exempt from payment of excise duty. Besides, an oral iron chelator is available for use under strict medical supervision. This drug is indigenously manufactured, is less expensive and is reportedly having better levels of patient compliance.

(d) and (e). Government is in the process of seeking proposals from the States to establish State Illness Assistance Funds supported by partial funding from the Central Government. Such funds if set up, can be used to assist poor patients requiring expensive treatment like Thalassemia.

The real answer to the problem is to prevent birth of afflicted children, for which facilities for counselling and pre-natal diagnosis are available at a few centres in the country. The ICMR, has initiated a multi-centric study for assessing the feasibility of introducing antenatal diagnosis in the National Family Welfare Programme.

[Translation]

Attack on High Commission Official in Pakistan

*142. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR :
SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether an officer of Indian High Commission in Pakistan was kidnapped by Pak authorities during October, 1996 and later released, and his wife was beaten brutally;

(b) if so, the exact details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government have raised the matter with Pakistan and asked the reasons for the same;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the response of Pakistan thereto;

(e) whether the Government raised the issue at any international forum;

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(g) the number of such incidents of assault on officers of Indian Missions in Pakistan during the last three years; and

(h) the steps being taken to stop recurrence of such incidents in the future and to provide adequate security to the officials and the family members of Indian Mission in Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (h). On the morning of 26th October 1996, about 10 Pakistani intelligence operatives broke into the residence of Shri A.K. Wahi, a staff member of our Mission in Islamabad. They forcibly dragged him to a car outside the house and abducted him. While doing so, they seriously injured Smt. Wahi who was hospitalised after the incident.

An immediate protest was lodged through diplomatic channels with the Pakistani authorities and Shri Wahi's safe return was demanded. He was released after being kept five hours in illegal and unwarranted custody. The Pakistani authorities asked us to withdraw Shri Wahi from Islamabad on the allegation that he was indulging in activities incompatible with his official status. This allegation was completely false and baseless. However in keeping with usual diplomatic practice, Shri Wahi and family returned to India on October 31, 1996.

The assault on Shri Wahi was in apparent retaliation for the apprehension of a Pakistan High Commission official in Delhi on 25th October, 1996 while accepting defence-related documents from an Indian contact. The Pakistani official was declared persona non grata.

The Government of India conveyed its deepest concern to the Pakistani authorities at this criminal incident. The Pakistan High Commissioner was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs twice and was informed that this abhorrent action was in flagrant violation of all norms of accepted diplomatic practice and the India-Pakistan Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Diplomatic/Consular Personnel. It was demanded that Pakistan should take all necessary steps for the safety and security of our personnel in Islamabad. The same views were conveyed by our High Commission in Islamabad to the Pakistan Foreign Office.

The India-Pakistan Code of Conduct for the Treatment of Diplomatic/Consular Personnel provides an instrument to address these concerns and we are scrupulously adhering to its stipulations.

There have been 6 incidents of assault on officials of our Mission in Islamabad in the last three years.

Regrettably, it appears that the Pakistani authorities are not taking effective measures to control the intimidating and criminal activities of their intelligence agencies against our officials in Islamabad. We have informed Pakistan that the recurrence of such incidents cannot but negatively impact on India-Pakistan relations.

[English]

Election to Non-permanent seat in UN Security Council

*143. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA
DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India was defeated by Japan in the election to the Non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council;

(b) whether the Government have examined the reasons, particularly the poor support from the non-aligned and third world countries;

(c) if so, the main points thereof;

(d) the steps taken to win the election;

(e) the number of countries that voted for India and Japan respectively and the number of countries abstained from voting;

(f) whether it is a fact that several member countries were supporting India's candidature and the situation had changed due to India's stand on C.T.B.T.;

(g) if so, the details thereof;

(h) the likely impact of this defeat on our chances of becoming permanent member in the UN Security Council; and

(i) the remedial steps that are being taken to strengthen India's position in the international arena?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (i). India obtained 40 votes in the election to the non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the term 1997-98. Japan polled 142 votes and was elected. No country abstained during the voting.

2. A careful assessment of all the factors relevant to this outcome has been made. The decision to contest the non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the term 1997-98 was taken in 1994. Strong efforts were made to project India's case. The Government took several steps to apprise other Governments of the strong merits of our candidature. These measure included approaches in various capitals and to diplomatic missions in New Delhi, presence in regional summit meetings, interaction through special envoys to foreign capitals and visitors to New Delhi and high level communications. The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations was also continuously engaged in this